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Presentation

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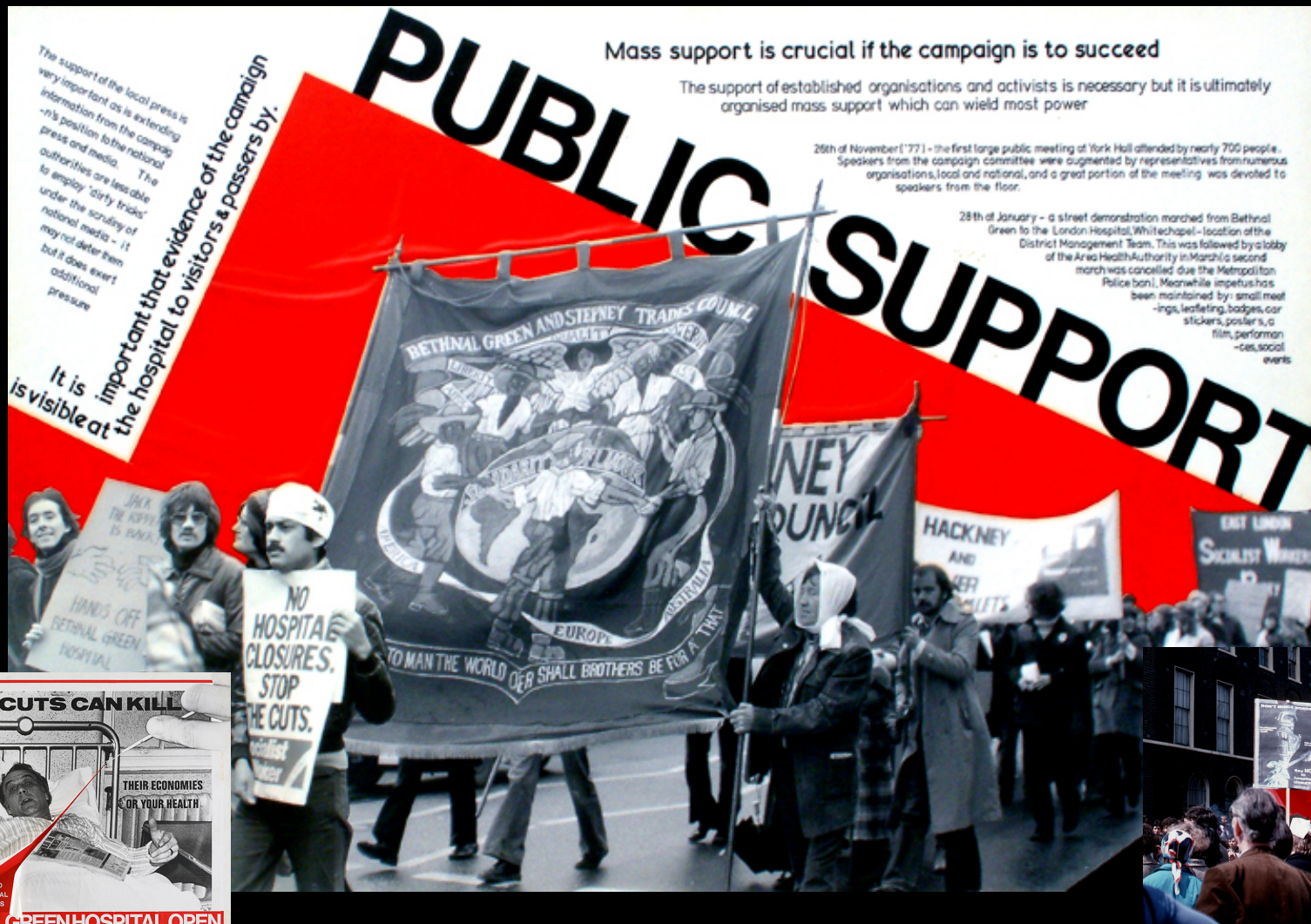
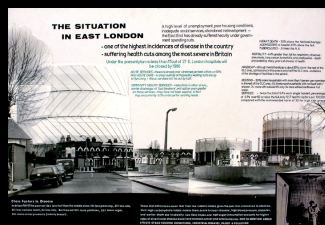
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Loraine Leeson

... some lessons learned on the art and politics of social engagement
1978 – 2013



Mass support is crucial if the campaign is to succeed

The support of established organisations and activists is necessary but it is ultimately organised mass support which can wield most power

26th of November ('77) - the first large public meeting at York Hall attended by nearly 700 people. Speakers from the campaign committee were augmented by representatives from numerous organisations, local and national, and a great portion of the meeting was devoted to speakers from the floor.

28th of January - a street demonstration marched from Bethnal Green to the London Hospital, Whitechapel - location of the District Management Team. This was followed by a lobby of the Area Health Authority in Marsh's second march was cancelled due to the Metropolitan Police ban. Meanwhile impetus has been maintained by: small meetings, leafleting, badges, car stickers, posters, a film, performance, social events

Campaign to Save Bethnal Green Hospital 1978



PASSING THE BUCK

games for multinational drug companies

MENTAL ILLNESS IS CLASS CONSCIOUS!

It can strike anyone - but it is more likely to strike someone from a deprived area

1 woman in 6, 1 man in 9... have treatment in a psychiatric hospital at some time in their lives - most are from deprived environments. Mental illness is expected to have been estimated as high as 40% for working class mothers with young children. The incidence of schizophrenia can be calculated with 95% accuracy according to the degree of poverty which prevails (P.M. Poverty and Schizophrenia 1973).

schizophrenia
depression
anxiety
bipolar disorder
schizophrenia
depression
anxiety
bipolar disorder

EAST LONDON

10% above national average mental hospital admissions

3 times the number of non diagnosed schizophrenics. The majority are single, homeless and without employment.

BUT FACILITIES ARE FEW

In Hackney the situation is worse - patients still requiring hospital treatment are discharged even extreme symptoms seem to make room for new urgent cases. The hospital at Queen for long term mental patients from the East End has been closed.

EAST LONDON NOW HAS NO PROVISION FOR LONG TERM CHRONIC PATIENTS

How is there provision for violent patients. They are currently dealt with by the police and are not receiving the psychiatric help they need. Government funds allocated for this purpose are being held back.

WE MUST DEMAND THAT THESE FUNDS ARE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY

The Department of Health aims to reduce hospital places for the mentally ill from 9.35 per 1000 of the population to 5.5, with the provision of alternatives in more suitable community residences. However a RAND survey shows that this means would require 34,500 such residences. There are at present only 5,000.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO FIGHT FOR THE RESOURCES ESSENTIAL TO A PATIENT'S SATISFACTORY RECOVERY BUT THE NEED FOR AN IMPROVEMENT IN LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS MUST NOT BE FORGOTTEN - AN ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTIVE OF PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH SHOULD BE A RIGHT, NOT A PRIVILEGE

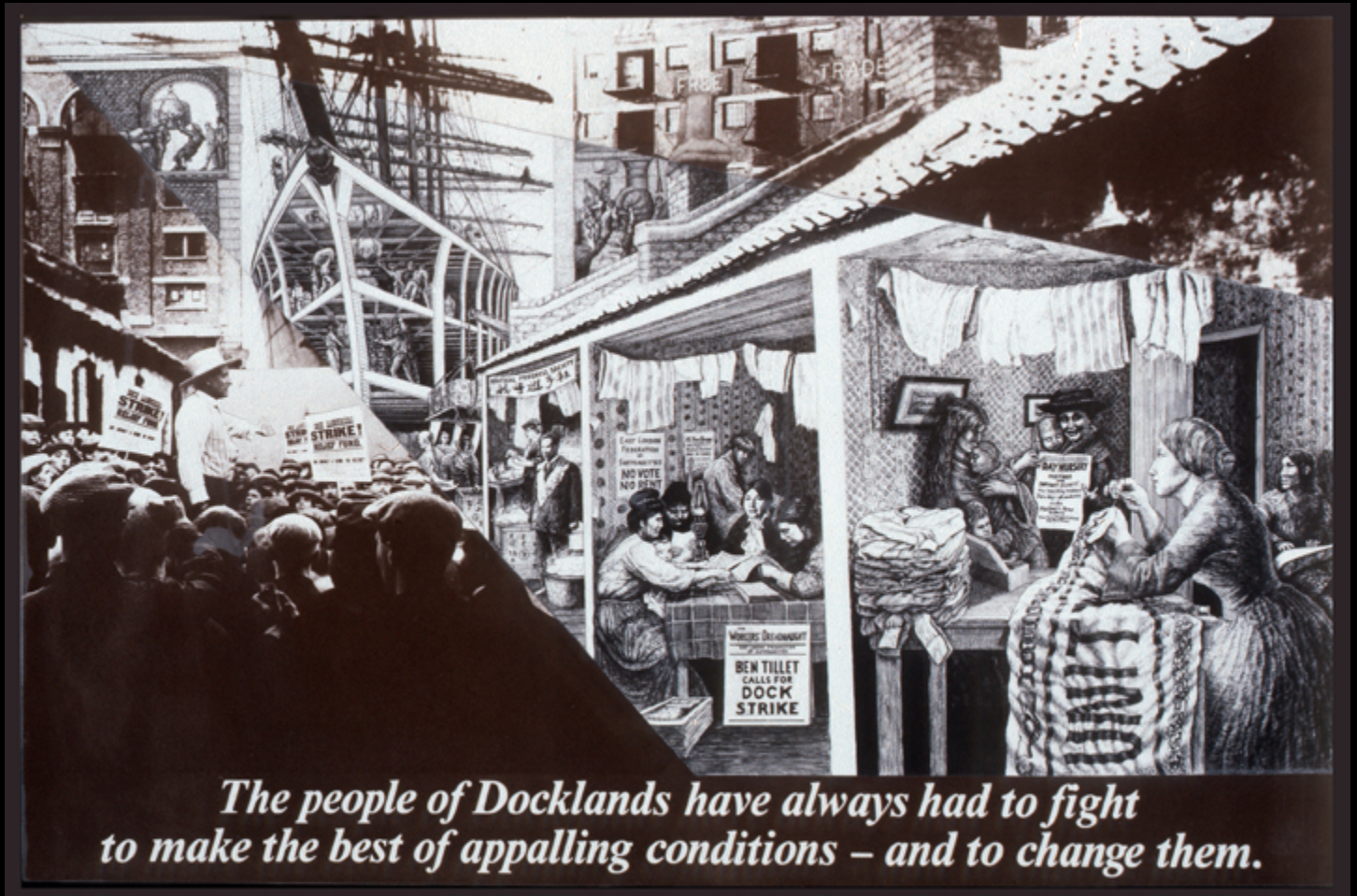
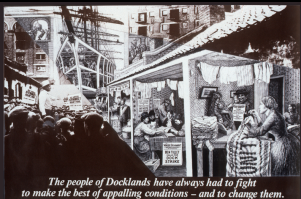
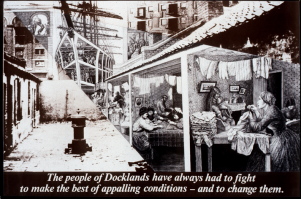


East London Health Project 1978



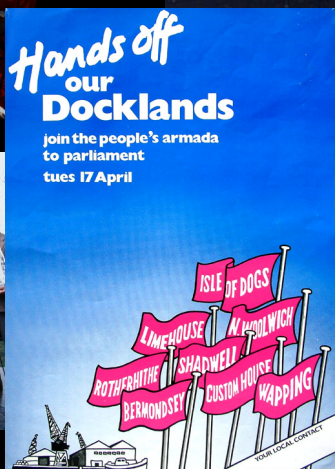
Docklands Community Poster Project 1981-91





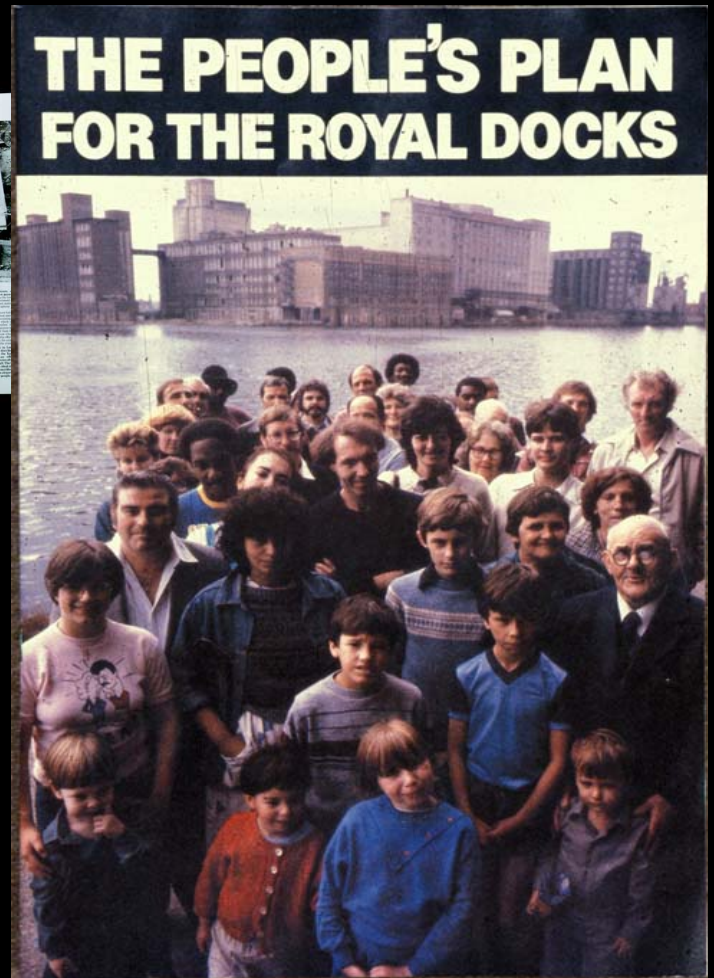
Docklands Community Poster Project

- history of housing photo-mural sequence

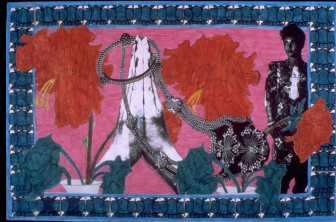


Docklands Community Poster Project

Peoples Armadas to Parliament 1984-86



Docklands Community Poster Project
Peoples Plan for the Royal Docks 1983



West Meets East 1992



Awakenings 1995-6
after *Resurrection* by Stanley Spencer

We were Children of Mary at school a female organisation for women. You had to an amount of prayer and put in extra hours in contact with God and the Virgin Mary. There was a big statue of the Virgin Mary at the end of the study which would have a white veil on it and the older we got, the more we moved down the study on the assumption that we would behave ourselves and I used to polish my shoes in the veil as an act of revolt!

I think that Celtic people are naturally effervescent with a positive attitude to life. Irish people were like that before the famine of the 1840's. After the famine the heavy hand of Catholicism crept into Ireland. If a naturally indigenous culture had been allowed to develop, a much more natural

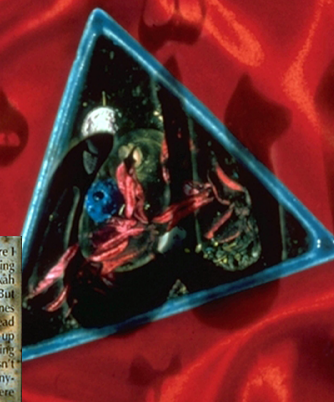


evolution of a culture into the 20th Century would have occurred.

Some of the times women will ask you to have a mass said for the dearly departed. The worst experience I had was the first, she said "Would you have a mass said for my dead foetus?" And I said "alright, but I'll have to find out where the local Church is and find a Priest." She was horrified because she didn't realise that people like me are so distant from religion. The whole point about religion whether it's orthodox or fundamentalist is that it's about rules. But it's not about choice. You can't choose which rules you keep and don't keep and when to keep them. It's the opposite of autonomy - it's not having the freedom to choose and

If you are a girl you can't travel and you want to go somewhere, still you have to get permission from your brother or father. Because as a woman, you're not really a proper person. And you feel "well I am intelligent, I can do this and that then why should I be less than my brother?"

My sister was in prison in Iran because she was a political prisoner and I didn't know really if



from your family is very painful - you are cut off from your roots, by force.

I just think about the nice thing about my culture. I threw away all the bad things. I threw away the nastiness, the fanatic religious things because that's not my part of culture. I still can have my culture, my identity, as an Iranian and not have any involvement of Islam in it. And that's what I keep. I celebrate my New Year. I lay the table, I grow herbs and I have a party. I have rice and Sabzi pulao with fish for my New Year day and I respect and keep all the good part of my culture. But nothing beside the nice things - all the bad things away.

My husband got angry when women got monthly periods. There is a Hindu God, Hanuman who came into his mind and he lost his temper only on women. I believed that my husband's God was totally different from Hanuman. And I told my husband "I don't believe it. Hanuman never got married because he respected women as a daughter, sister and mother." He frightened me that if when I have my period I go and cook anything, his mother is going to get very angry. So there were four or five days when I was shaking.

Indian girls are taught by their families that you must respect your husband because he is God and you must fulfil his wishes and please him that is your duty. Women have to do all the sacrifices. On my



side, I thought "I'd divorce him, if I run away, nobody is going to like it. I'd have to go back to my family and be a burden again. Nobody is going to get married with me, especially Indian men they like young girls - virgins. If somebody married me then my family would have to spend lots of money on the dowry system and the wedding again. So I really never wanted to put pressure and burdens on my family."

In prison, I got more freedom than I used to have before. I spent three years and four months in prison and I got more love and affection from officers, nurses and all the inmates. I could talk with anyone. I could make friends. I could go to any lady's room - this was freedom!



quite a long time before I got upset about not being able to buy Chanukah candles anywhere. But there were always tunes going round in my head that I'd been brought up with that I wasn't hearing anymore and I wasn't going to hear them anywhere because they were quite particular to my own Sephardi background.

I remembered one time really well and then a few years ago I realised that I could actually work it out and play it which I'd never done before. So I did - then I realised that I could do more than that! I could transcribe it and then we could all play it on the band and perform it and that was wonderful because it was like something back to life which I'd thought I'd lost for good.

I was very artistic from the day I understood myself. My family didn't know how to cope with that and were suffering. They decided to get rid of me at the age of seventeen and a half when I came here. I say "get rid of me" but they found my husband here for me and I came to marry him.

I had to wear what they wanted me to wear, I had to cook what they wanted me to cook, I had to eat what they wanted me to eat, I had to talk to people the way they wanted me to talk. I always had to be somebody else - I could never be myself.

When I came here I used to write my poetry, just as a hobby, and used to sing while I am working or outside. I had to put a complete stop on all that. My mum said to me



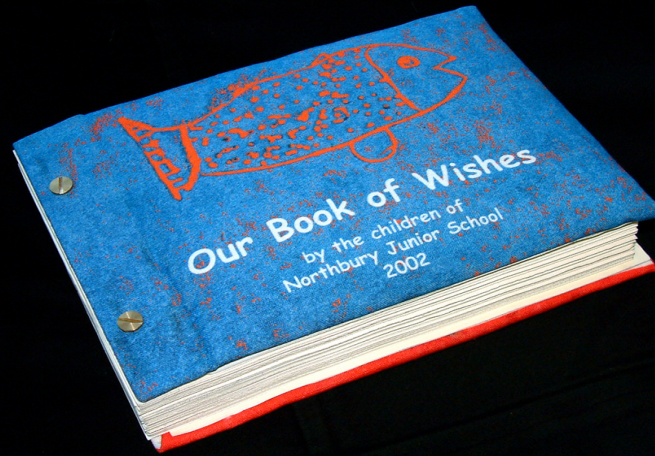
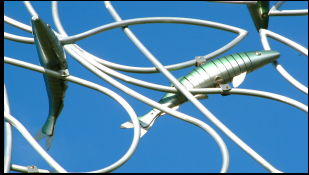
Because your husband is like a God."

He would want me to sing in front of people and say "Come on, come on sing!" When I'd just come home from the hospital with my child, he'd wake me up at two o'clock and say "You will have to sing, you will have to!" And then he would use that against me.

She didn't want me to divorce him, because she was scared of what society, people would say. I said, "I won't say I made a mistake, because I did not. You chose a bad, stupid man for me."



Between Family Lines 1994



The Catch 2002

VOLCO 1999 to 2009
www.volco.org

YOUNG PERSON'S GUIDE 2 EAST LONDON



SEARCH: GO

HOME

BOROUGHES

THEMES

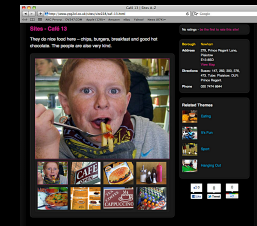
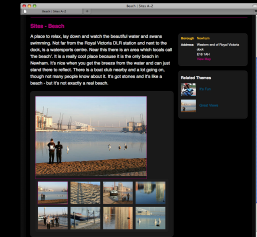
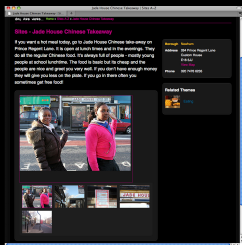
SITES A-Z

VIDEOS

THE PROJECT

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THE YOUNG PERSON'S GUIDE TO EAST LONDON

East London places they don't put in travel guides!



Café Verde @ Riverside > The Mosaic, 45 Narrow Street, Limehouse, London E14 8DN > Fresh food, authentic Italian menu, nice surroundings – a good place to hang out, sit with an ice cream and watch the fountain. For the full review and travel information go to [page 5](#)

Discover great places to visit in East London reviewed by the teenagers who live there. In this guide you'll find reviews, travel information and photos of over 200 places to visit, all within the five London 2012 Olympic boroughs.

WWW.YPG2EL



The Young Person's Guide to East London
2007-12

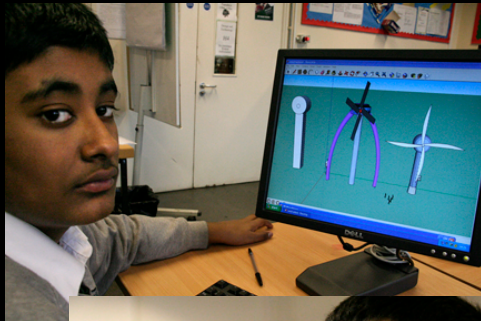
www.ypg2el.org



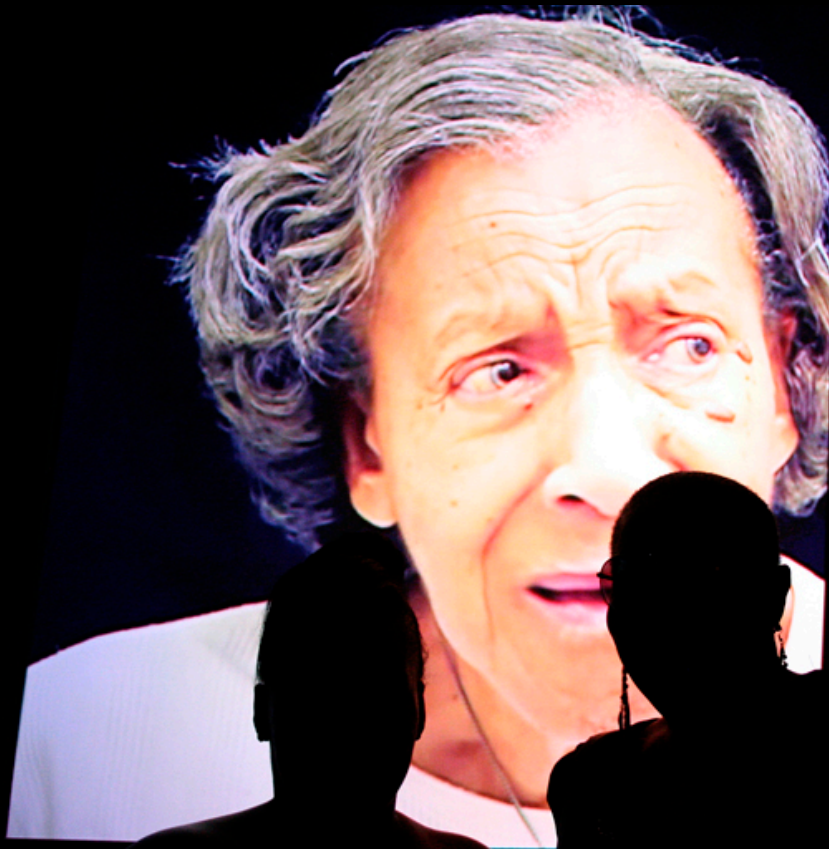
GeezerPower 2007-08

ACTIVE ENERGY

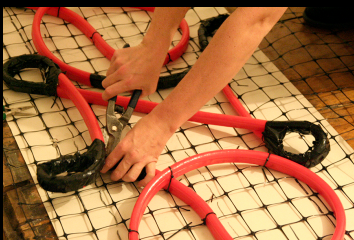
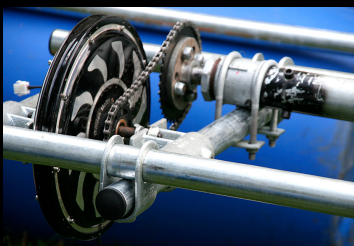
Where art and engineering meet



Active Energy
from 2008



Active Energy: Pittsburgh
2012



[www. active-energy-london.org](http://www.active-energy-london.org)

arising issues...



an invitation



the art of negotiation



collaboration or participation?



objects, fragments and narratives

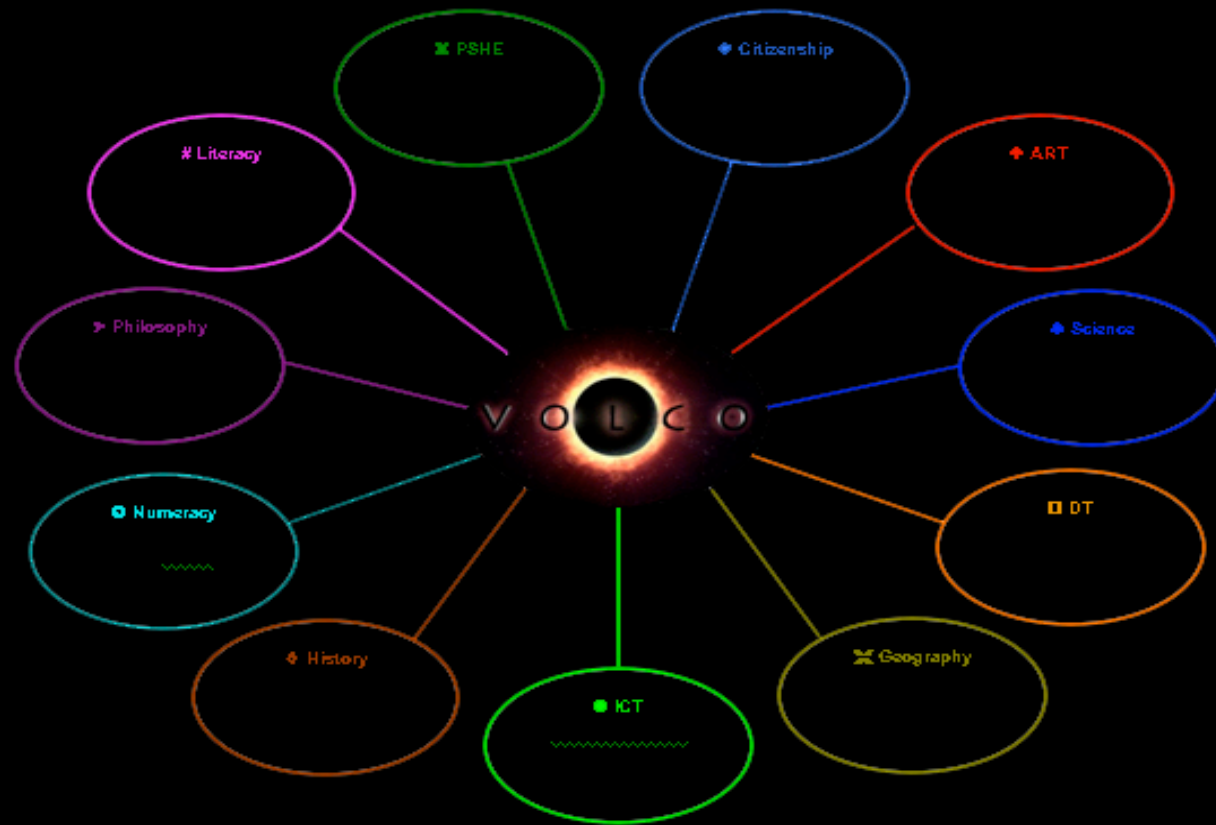


<p>Millennium Mob</p> <p>Zap</p>		
<p>My ears hear the truth</p>	<p>My eyes see what people think</p>	
		
<p>I live on top of the sun. There's just me and my twin Zip. I wear black flares and starry shirt. I can see the whole world on my shirt. I have an invisible hat. My trousers turn into anything. I am 10 years old in your world, 100 in mine.</p>		

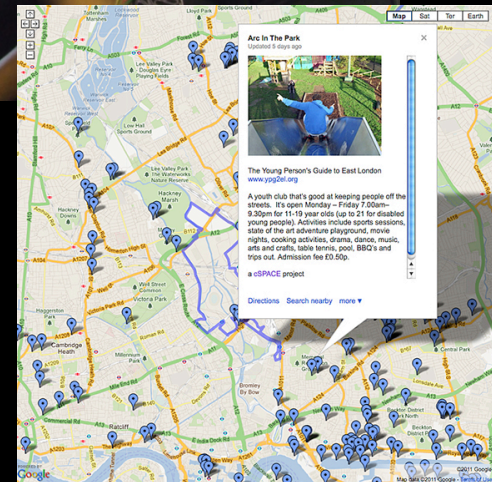
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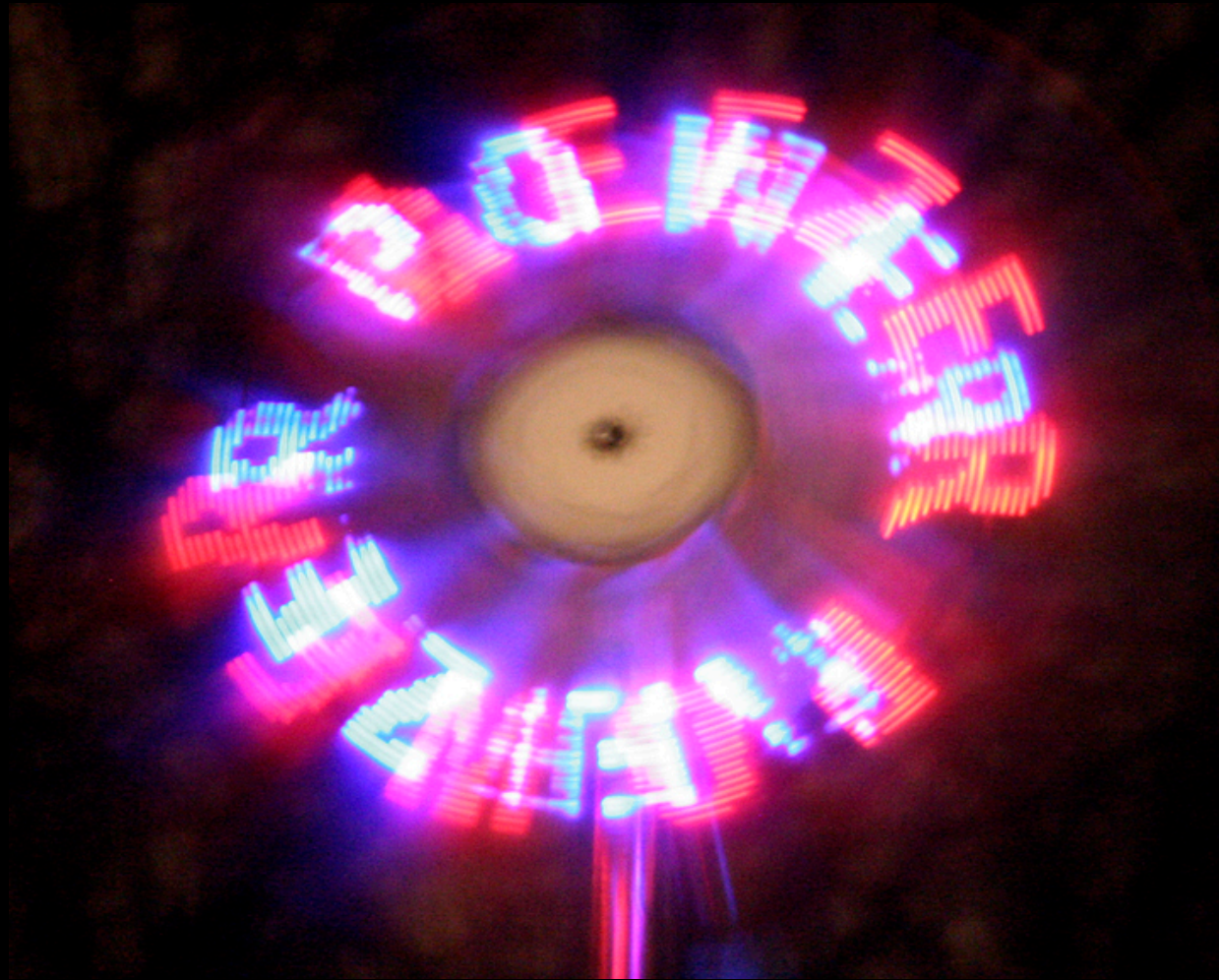
managing collective input



educational process meets artistic production



transforming the means of production



a process/product continuum



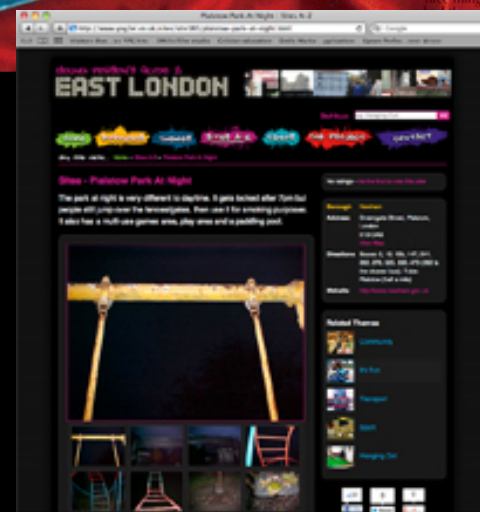
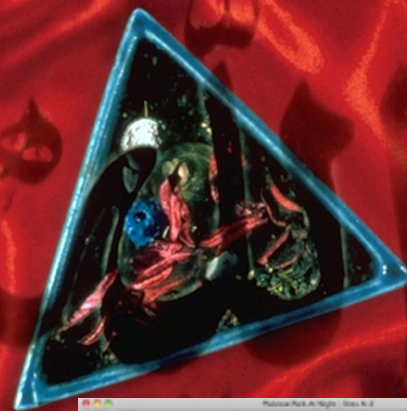
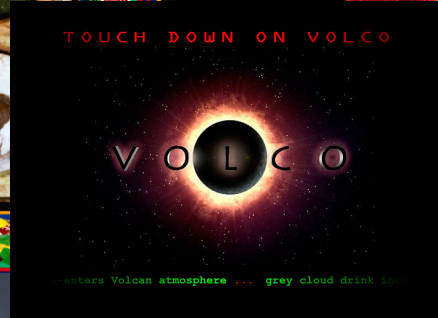
If you are a girl you can't travel and you want to go somewhere, still you have to get permission from your brother or father because as a woman, you're not really a proper person. And you feel "well I am intelligent, I can do this and that then why should I be less than my brother?"

My sister was in prison in Iran because she was a political prisoner and they killed her head - really it was to punish her, they were angry because she was a woman, they were angry because she was a woman, they were angry because she was a woman.

I can't see my talk to him, I see him away from my family.

from your family is very painful - you are cut off from your roots, by force.

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locating the aesthetic



when it goes wrong



feedback and evaluation



funding



individual or organisation?



a role for art in social change

